



“There are times when someone in a mental health crisis may be acting in ways that can seem suspicious to officers and others who don’t understand that behavior could be the symptom of a serious illness. There’s more to being a law enforcement officer than just arresting people, and this CIT training provides the tools to truly assist people in getting the help they need.”

– Lauderdale County Chief Deputy Ward Calhoun

In order to expand services for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health is making available training to establish Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) across the state.

What are Crisis Intervention Teams?

Crisis Intervention Teams are the product of a partnership between local law enforcement officers and a variety of agencies, including Community Mental Health Centers, primary health providers and behavioral health professionals. Officers who have received crisis intervention training respond to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and divert them to an appropriate setting to provide treatment; ensuring individuals are not arrested and taken to jail due to the symptoms of their illness.

Crisis Intervention Teams are a nationally-recognized best practice, and officers who have received training have been recognized as having the understanding and skills needed to resolve crisis situations.

During 2015-2017, DMH is able to offer through a federal grant **CIT** training for up to 40 officers a year at no cost to law enforcement agencies. The training will be conducted by members of the Lauderdale County Community Partnership.

Who Makes Up a Crisis Intervention Team?

A community partnership between law enforcement and members of the local community is essential for a **CIT**. While officers are trained in crisis situations, the goal is to divert individuals from a possible arrest to a setting where they can receive services for their illness. Partnerships between law enforcement, Community Mental Health Centers or other local health care providers are critical in arranging a single point of entry for treatment services.



What Training is Required?

CIT officers receive 40 hours of training on topics such as mental health diagnoses, medications, substance use issues and more. They also receive hands-on instruction in de-escalation techniques and hear first-hand accounts from individuals who have experienced mental health crises themselves. The training has a specific focus on safety, for both the officers and the individuals in crisis, and is also recognized as 40 hours of Continuing Education Credit by the Department of Public Safety.

Does CIT Work?

Studies have shown that crisis intervention significantly reduces the instances of arrest and re-arrest for individuals with serious mental illness. **CIT** officers are able to identify individuals experiencing a crisis and are more likely to divert them to a treatment program.

Crisis Intervention Teams have also been shown to reduce officer injuries and calls requiring special officer teams. Crisis Intervention Teams has worked in both urban and rural communities.

Where Can I Find Out More?

For more information, including how to arrange **CIT** training, contact Brent Hurley at the Mississippi Department of Mental Health at 601-359-1288 or brent.hurley@dmh.state.ms.us.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CRISIS INTERVENTION
TEAMS IN YOUR AREA, CONTACT 601.359.1288.**

